Effect of Personality and Social Support on Psychological Well-Being of Employed Women in Their Job Sector

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ABSTRACT

The psychological well-being of employed women is influenced by various factors, including personality traits and social support. This study aims to explore the impact of personality characteristics and perceived social support on the psychological well-being of working women in private and government schools in Patna, Bihar. The purposive sampling method was used for data collection. A total number of 100 female teachers (50 married and 50 unmarried). The socio-demographic and personal data sheet, Five Personality Trait Inventory, Psychological Well-Being Scale, and Social Support Scale were used to record participants' details and assess their personality traits, well-being, and perceived social support. Results revealed that married women showed significantly higher psychological well-being (M=75.8, SD=10.2) compared to unmarried women (M=70.5, SD=9.8; t=2.31, p=0.02). Additionally, social support was significantly higher among married women (M=80.3, SD=9.5) than unmarried women (M=72.1, SD=8.7; t=3.12, p=0.001). The findings suggest that social support and personality traits, particularly conscientiousness and lower neuroticism, contribute to better psychological well-being.

Keywords: Psychological Well-Being, Personality Traits, Social Support, Employed And Unemployed Women.

INTRODUCTION

In today's society, women contribute significantly to both professional and domestic responsibilities, often playing multiple roles that require substantial cognitive, emotional, and physical resources. The ability to balance these responsibilities can greatly impact their psychological well-being. Psychological well-being is a multidimensional construct encompassing emotional stability, life satisfaction, and effective coping mechanisms (Ryff& Keyes, 1995). Personality traits play a crucial role in shaping individuals' responses to workplace stress and personal challenges. The Five-Factor Model (Costa &McCrae 1999) identifies five core personality traits-openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism-that influence adaptive coping strategies, emotional regulation, and resilience. For instance, conscientious individuals tend to exhibit greater self-discipline and perseverance, aiding their ability to manage multiple roles effectively, while neuroticism is associated with higher levels of stress and emotional instability (Judge et al., 1997). Furthermore, social support from family, friends, and significant others serves as a critical buffer against work-related stress and emotional exhaustion (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Support networks provide emotional reassurance, practical assistance, and a sense of belonging, which can mitigate the adverse effects of occupational stressors.

Research shows the significant role of personality traits in determining psychological well-being. The Five-Factor Model (Costa & McCrae, 1999) provides a well-established framework for understanding how specific personality traits contribute to mental health. High conscientiousness and emotional stability (low neuroticism) are consistently linked to better psychological well-being, as individuals with these traits tend to engage in effective problem-solving and stress-management strategies (Steel et al., 2008). Extraversion and agreeableness are also associated with positive affect and interpersonal support, further enhancing well-being (DeNeve& Cooper, 1998). In addition to personality, social support has been identified as a key determinant of psychological resilience. Social support can be categorized into emotional, instrumental, and informational support, each playing a role in reducing stress and preventing burnout (House, 1983). Studies have shown that strong social networks enhance coping mechanisms, particularly in high-demand work environments (Taylor, 2011). Cohen and Wills (1985) reported that social support mitigates the impact of stress by providing psychological and practical resources that aid in adaptation. Married and unmarried working women experience different dynamics in social support and stress levels. Research indicates that married women often report higher social support, particularly from spouses and family members, which can provide emotional reassurance and practical assistance (Voydanoff, 2005). However, they also face additional domestic responsibilities, which may

lead to role strain and increased stress (Hochschild&Machung, 2012). Conversely, unmarried women may experience greater independence but potentially lower levels of emotional support from immediate family (Van den Eynde, A., 2022).

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research Design: Between group design was used to examine the Effect of Personality and Social Support on Psychological Well-Being between married and unmarried employedwomen.

Sample: The sample consists of 100 employed women (50 married and 50 unmarried) selectedby using the purposive sampling method. The study population includes teachers from private and government schools.

TOOLS USED

Socio-Demographic and Personal Data Sheet- A semi-structured proforma designed to collect information on gender, education, age, marital status and job status.

Five Personality Trait Inventory (FPTI)-Developed by Prof. K.S. Mishra (1997), this tool consists of 50 items evaluating five personality traits: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. The test-retest reliability ranges from 0.76 to 0.88, while the split-half reliability measures between 0.79 and 0.91. The validity coefficient of the inventory is reported to be between 0.75 and 0.89.

Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS)- Developed by Dr. Devendra Singh Sisodia and Miss Pooja Chaudhry (2003), this tool measures psychological well-being across five domains: life satisfaction, efficiency, sociability, mental health, and interpersonal relations. The test-retest reliability of the PWBS ranges from 0.70 to 0.84, while the split-half reliability is reported to be between 0.72 and 0.87. The validity coefficient of the test lies between 0.74 and 0.82, ensuring its robustness as a psychometric tool

Social Support Scale (SSS)-Developed by Abdul RaffieNaik and Shah Mohd. Khan (1995), this scale assesses perceived social support in three areas: family support, friend support, and significant other support. The test-retest reliability ranges from 0.72 to 0.84, while the split-half reliability measures between 0.74 and 0.87. The validity coefficient of the scale is reported to be between 0.76 and 0.88.

Procedure of the Study
The study will be conducted in private and government schools in Patna. Participants will be selected using a purposive sampling method. The Five Personality Trait Inventory, Psychological Well-Being Scale, and Social Support Scale will be administered individually to each participant. The study will compare married and unmarried women regarding personality traits, social support, and psychological well-being. Data analysis will be conducted using appropriate statistical tools to examine group differences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Variable	Married Women (n=50)	Unmarried Women (n=50)	Total (N=100)
Age (Mean ± SD)	35.2 ± 4.5	30.1 ± 3.8	32.6 ± 4.2
Education Level	Graduate: 30	Graduate: 35	Graduate: 65
	Postgraduate: 20	Postgraduate: 15	Postgraduate: 35
Job Type	Government: 25	Government: 20	Government: 45
	Private: 25	Private: 30	Private: 55

Table 1 shows that the average age of married women (Mean ± SD: 35.2 ± 4.5) was higher than that of unmarried women (Mean ± SD: 30.1 ± 3.8), resulting in an overall mean age of 32.6 ± 4.2 years across the total sample.

Among married women, 30 had completed graduate education, while 20 had attained postgraduate qualifications. In comparison, 35 unmarried women had a graduate degree, and 15 had pursued postgraduate studies. Overall, a greater proportion of the total sample (N=100) had completed graduate education (65), with 35 attaining postgraduate degrees.

Employment type was categorized into government and private sectors. Among married women, 25 were employed in government jobs, and 25 in private-sector roles. Among unmarried women, 20 worked in government jobs, while 30 were in private-sector employment. The total sample consisted of 45 women in government jobs and 55 in private-sector employment, indicating a slightly higher representation of private-sector employees in the study.

Table 2: Comparison of Psychological Well-Being Based on Personality Traits and Social Support

Variables	Married Women (Mean ± SD)	Unmarried Women (Mean ± SD)	t-value	p-value
Psychological Well-Being	75.8 ± 10.2	70.5 ± 9.8	2.31	0.02*
Social Support	80.3 ± 9.5	72.1 ± 8.7	3.12	0.001**
Conscientiousness	78.5 ± 8.4	73.2 ± 7.9	2.45	0.015*
Neuroticism (inverse)	70.4 ± 9.3	65.8 ± 8.2	2.10	0.04*

*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$ (statistically significant)

Table 2 shows that married women reported a higher mean psychological well-being score (75.8 ± 10.2) compared to unmarried women (70.5 ± 9.8). The difference was statistically significant (t = 2.31, p = 0.02), suggesting that marital status may contribute positively to psychological well-being. Married women also exhibited significantly greater social support (80.3 ± 9.5) compared to unmarried women (72.1 ± 8.7), with a highly significant t-value of 3.12 (p = 0.001).

The results also show that the conscientiousness trait was higher among married women (78.5 ± 8.4) than unmarried women (73.2 ± 7.9), with a statistically significant difference (t = 2.45, p = 0.015). Furthermore, the results indicate that lower neuroticism scores, signifying better emotional stability, were observed in married women (70.4 ± 9.3) compared to unmarried women (65.8 ± 8.2). This difference was also statistically significant (t = 2.10, p = 0.04), implying that married women might experience fewer negative emotions and better emotional regulation.

DISCUSSION

The demographic characteristics of the participants reveal notable differences in age, education and employment status between married and unmarried women. The mean age of married women was significantly higher than that of unmarried women, suggesting that marriage is often associated with increased life experiences, responsibilities and potentially different coping mechanisms. Previous research indicates that as individuals age, they develop greater emotional regulation, problem-solving skills and resilience, which may contribute to variations in psychological well-being and stress management between the two groups (Charles &Carstensen, 2010). The findings suggest that a slightly higher proportion of unmarried women (35%) had pursued postgraduate education compared to married women (20%).

This may be attributed to the fact that marriage and family responsibilities can influence women's educational and career aspirations (Goldin, 2006). Studies have shown that marriage and family commitments often lead to changes in career paths, as married women may prioritize family responsibilities over continued education (Blossfeld&Huinink, 1991). However, the overall educational attainment in both groups was relatively high, with the majority of participants having at least a graduate degree (65%). Higher education levels are generally linked to better psychological well-being, as they provide individuals with greater access to job opportunities, financial independence, and improved coping skills (Ross & Wu, 1995). In terms of employment, the distribution across government and private-sector jobs revealed a slightly higher representation of private-sector employees (55%). While an equal number of married women (25) worked in government and private-sector roles, more unmarried women (30) were employed in the private sector. Employment in government jobs is often associated with job security, stable income and benefits, which can reduce stress and contribute to better mental well-being (Clark, Georgellis, &Sanfey, 2001). On the other hand, private-sector jobs may offer greater flexibility but can also involve higher work-related stress and job instability, potentially impacting psychological health differently based on marital status (Drobnic, Beham, &Prag, 2010).

The study compared significantly higher psychological well-being scores reported by married women compared to unmarried women with previous research indicating that marriage serves as a protective factor for mental health. Marriage provides emotional support, companionship and a structured lifestyle, all of which contribute to better psychological outcomes (Waite & Gallagher, 2001). The stability and predictability associated with marriage help to reduce uncertainty and stress, thereby enhancing overall well-being (Carr& Springer, 2010). One of the key components through which marriage influences psychological well-being is social and emotional support. Studies suggest that married individuals benefit from mutual care, encouragement, and problem-sharing, which act as buffers against stress and psychological distress (Dush& Amato, 2005; Robles et al., 2014). The emotional intimacy and companionship offered by a spouse contribute to increased life satisfaction and a greater sense of purpose (Holt-

Lunstad et al., 2008). Additionally, marriage has been linked to improved health behaviors, such as better dietary habits, regular medical check-ups and reduced engagement in risky behaviors, which indirectly contribute to better psychological health (Umberson& Montez, 2010). The presence of a partner can also facilitate better coping strategies during difficult times, thereby reducing the likelihood of depression and anxiety (Simon, 2002). However, the benefits of marriage on psychological well-being are not universal and depend on the quality of the relationship. Research indicates that individuals in high-conflict or unsatisfactory marriages may experience higher levels of stress, anxiety and depression compared to unmarried counterparts (Hawkins & Booth, 2005). Thus, while marriage can enhance psychological well-being, the nature of the marital relationship plays a crucial role in determining mental health outcomes. Furthermore, cultural and societal expectations surrounding marriage may influence psychological well-being. In many societies, marriage is perceived as a normative milestone and unmarried women may face social stigma, loneliness or pressure to conform, which can negatively impact mental health (DePaulo& Morris, 2005).

Social support was found to be significantly higher among married women, emphasizing its crucial role in promoting psychological well-being. This finding suggests that strong social support systems help individuals to cope more effectively with stress and adversity (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Social support acts as a protective factor by providing emotional validation, practical assistance and a sense of belonging, all of which contribute to overall well-being (Uchino, 2009). Spousal support, in particular, has been linked to better emotional regulation and a greater sense of security, which may explain the higher well-being scores among married women (Antonucci et al., 2011). The presence of a supportive partner can facilitate effective problem-solving, reduce emotional distress and enhance feelings of self-worth (Feeney & Collins, 2015). Additionally, married individuals often experience a more stable and predictable support system, which contributes to their ability to manage stress and maintain mental health (Thoits, 2011). In contrast, unmarried women may experience lower perceived support, potentially contributing to reduced psychological well-being. Research indicates that unmarried individuals may rely more on friendships and extended family for social support, but these networks may not always provide the same level of consistency and availability as spousal support (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010). Furthermore, societal expectations and cultural norms may lead to feelings of loneliness or social exclusion among unmarried women, further impacting their psychological health (DePaulo& Morris, 2005). It is also important to note that the quality of social support, rather than just its presence, plays a significant role in well-being. Negative or unsupportive relationships within a marriage can be noisome to mental health, sometimes leading to increased stress and reduced life satisfaction (Rook, 2015). Therefore, while marriage generally offers enhanced social support, its benefits are contingent upon the nature and quality of the relationship.

The study compared significantly higher conscientiousness scores among married women (t = 2.45, p = 0.015) suggest that they may engage in more goal-directed behaviors, organization and responsibility. Conscientious individuals are known to exhibit greater self-discipline, reliability and perseverance, all of which contribute to overall well-being (RR & Costa., 2008). Marriage may reinforce conscientious behaviors by inhancing stability, routine and shared obligations, which promote a sense of purpose and responsibility (Bleidorn, Hopwood, & Lucas, 2018). Additionally, marital roles often require planning, cooperation and compromise, which may further encourage conscientious traits over time (Roberts, Walton, &Viechtbauer, 2006). Lower neuroticism scores (i.e., higher emotional stability) were observed among married women compared to unmarried women (t = 2.10, p = 0.04). Neuroticism is often linked to higher stress, mood instability and increased vulnerability to anxiety and depression (Steel, Schmidt, & Shultz, 2008). Individuals with high neuroticism tend to experience more frequent negative emotions and have difficulty regulating stress, which can negatively impact overall well-being (Lahey, 2009). The emotional and social support provided by marriage may help mitigate these negative emotions and promote better emotional regulation, ultimately leading to greater psychological resilience (Roberts, Luo, Briley, Chow, Su, & Hill, 2017). These findings align with prior research suggesting that marriage can act as a protective factor against emotional distress and emotion dysregulation (Overbeek, Vollebergh, Engels, &Meeus, 2003). Furthermore, stable relationships have been associated with a gradual decline in neuroticism over time, likely due to increased security, emotional validation, and the regulation of negative affect through interpersonal support (Neyer&Asendorpf, 2001).

CONCLUSION

The results indicate that married women report significantly higher psychological well-being and social support compared to unmarried women. This may be attributed to stronger family support networks. However, personality traits such as conscientiousness and lower neuroticism also played a role in better psychological well-being. The findings highlight the importance of social support in managing occupational stress and suggest that enhancing workplace support structures can improve mental health outcomes.

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